

PRODUCT CLOSE-UP



Pearl Export 052, shown with 700 Deluxe hardware.

Pearl has recently introduced a new series of lower-line drum kits designed for the budget-minded or semi-pro player. The drums themselves are made by Pearl/Taiwan, while the hardware is from Pearl/Japan.

The shells are made of 9-ply wood, molded under heat compression with no reinforcing rings. They have angled seaming, staggered joints, and are coated on the inside with *Acousticoat* sealer. Five drumkit configurations are being made available, either with 700 *Deluxe* or 800 *Pro* hardware.

The *Export 052-Pro* kit consists of: 14x22 bass drum, 8x12 and 9x13 toms, 16x16 floor tom, 5x14 metal snare drum, and the 800 *Series* hardware. The complete kit retails at \$925 (\$850 with the 700 hardware).

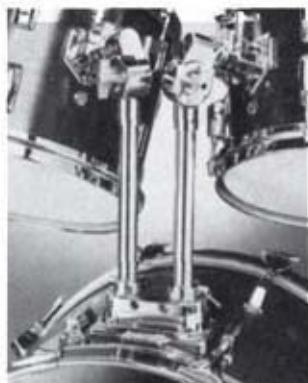
BASS DRUM

The 14 x 22 bass drum has 20 lugs with T-style tension rods and channeled metal hoops inlaid with plastic to match the drum's finish. A rubber strip with adhesive backing is supplied which fits into the hoop's channel for pedal mounting.

Pearl has designed new spurs for the *Export* kits. They are similar to the professional model, having a telescoping inner leg—in this case, adjusted with a drum key. The spur tips can be converted from rubber to spike point by rotating the tip up on the threaded shaft. Instead of locking into a pre-set forward angle like the pro model, these spurs move freely. The player sets the desired angle. For packing, they fold flush to the shell. The new spurs are very efficient and hold the bass drum in position easily.

The drum is fitted with Remo's epoxy-hoop, coated *SoundBlaster* heads, and oddly enough, this particular drum had no felt damper strip included. The drum had a full sound, but would need muffling for modern playing. For home use, the *Soundmasters* are fine. In live work, I'd opt for a stronger head (CS, *Pinstripe*, *Fiberskyn 2*) as the *Soundmasters* do tend to wear out pretty quick.

MOUNTING SYSTEM



TH-80

Pearl has developed a new holder, replacing the old 727 model (which has since been given to Cosmic Percussion and Rogers for their budget kits). The *TH-80* uses the same base plate as the professional holder, having a hole for each arm to pass through. Each arm is secured by indirect pressure, a split clamp, with a T-bolt on one side, and a sprung square-head screw on the other. The holder arms use concealed ratchets adjusted by a center T-bolt, and give approximately 13 inches of height. A shorter model is available for use

Pearl

with floor stands. The tom-toms have mini-versions of the base plate, once again, secured by indirect clamping.

Pearl has fattened up their memory locks, now with tongues at both top and bottom. The tube that passes through the drum has a memory lock for angle/distance, and a memory lock is on each down tube for fixing holder height. The *TH-80* is a very impressive holder. It is strong, will not sink or twist, and is easily adjustable.

TOM-TOMS

The 8 x 12 and 9 x 13 toms have 12 lugs each, and a single venthole directly below the holder bracket. The 16 x 16 floor tom has 16 lugs and three legs which are knurled for their top half and secured in their brackets directly by a T-screw. All the drums have internal mufflers on the batter side and triple-flanged pressed hoops. They are fitted with coated *Soundmaster* heads top and bottom. The *Soundmasters* are okay for keeping price down, but I'd recommend changing them to *Weather Kings* to get a cleaner tone. The drums do have nice resonance, but the *Soundmasters* seem to inhibit this. And, under hard playing, the *Soundmaster* heads dent up a great deal.

SNARE DRUM

The snare drum included with the *Export* kit is a 5 x 14 metal shell with ten double-ended lugs, 20-strand wire snares, and an internal muffler. The strainer is of the side-throw type, and has a fine-tuning knob on the throw-off side. The throw-off lever is covered with black plastic, molded to fit the shape of your fingers. The snares are connected at the throw-off and butt by plastic strips, not cord (an increasingly popular measure). The strainer is simplistic, but works well. Pearl also has a somewhat more sophisticated bridge-type strainer on some of their other *Export* snare drums. The snare drum had a dry tone, with that all-too-familiar metallic overtone. Again, changing to regular Remo heads made the drum come alive a bit more with better response for soft playing.

Export 052-Pro Drumkit

HARDWARE

Pearl has totally re-designed all of their hardware lines, and re-numbered them for an easier matching system. The *800 Series* included with this kit have thin black nylon bushings at their height joints, and new rubber feet for better surface gripping.



C-800



H-800

Two C-800 cymbal stands are included here. They have single-braced tripod bases, and two adjustable tiers (indirectly secured). Pearl's rotor tilter has been enlarged, but still follows the concept of their popular *Vari-Set* tom-tom arms. Practically any desirable angle can be achieved, since the tilter relies on a smooth "drum" rather than ratchet teeth. The tilter has an extra-long post to accommodate large cymbals at acute angles. A cast T-screw locks the angle. The tilter can also fold neatly against the stand itself for packing.

Pearl has also done away with their nylon cymbal stabilizers (which I liked) and have reverted back to the usual assortment of felt and metal washers, nylon tubing sleeve, and a very large wing nut designed not to spin up or down while playing. The

stands will not slip or sink. They afford more than ample height, and will fit into a standard trap case.

The H-800 hi-hat has a single-braced tripod base, and a split sand-blasted footboard with an adjustable/removable toe-stop. Spring tension is adjusted via a large black cylinder which operates with a threaded sleeve on the shaft. It is easily adjustable from the playing position. Pedal to pull-rod linkage is done with a fat nylon strap (not flexible). There are sprung spurs at the base, and a memory lock on the height tube. One slight problem involved the tilter screw on the hi-hat cup: it seemed to back off while playing, dropping the bottom cymbal to a flat angle. Perhaps a counterlock would be a good idea. Nevertheless, the H-800 is quiet, has efficient action, and stays in position.



P-800

Pearl's new P-800 drum pedal has a split footboard matching the hi-hat's, as well as a toe stop. Tension relies on a single expansion spring stretched downward. Linkage is done via a synthetic strap wrapped around a wheel on the axle. The strap can be adjusted for length. The beater housing/action wheel combination may be positioned anywhere along the axle, and is set with allen screws. Length of stroke can be adjusted by moving the spring along a slotted side piece, which while angling the spring, also angles the beater and footboard. Spring tension is adjusted via a knurled cylinder with locking nuts. There are two sprung spurs at the pedal's base. Pedal clamping is done with the usual wing-screw/plate, adjusted from underneath the footboard. There seemed to be a

dead spot in the pedal, which could perhaps be solved by including different strength springs. The one fitted was a bit too loose. The P-800 is quiet and sturdy. In fact, its construction is miles above the type of pedals usually found on second-line kits.



S-800

This test kit was supplied with the old model 906 snare stand instead of the new S-800 which is normally included. The S-800 has a tripod base, and like all the new Pearl snare stands, has a lowered basket. Instead of being atop the angle hinge, the basket is directly in line with it. This provides for set-up of deeper drums, as well as the regular 5" and 6" depths. The basket arms grip the drum via the common threaded casing nut beneath the basket's shaft, which is set away from the stand.

FINISHES

The *Export* kits are available in four plastic coverings: jet black, pure white, silver flash and green flash. A special *Export* kit with birch shells comes in either wine red or walnut lacquer. All of Pearl's logo badges now have serial numbers. However, the *Export* kit badges are glued on, not tacked like the pro drums. To complement the *Export Series*, Pearl has recently come out with a budget cymbal line: CX-500.

The buyer of this kit is getting quite a good deal with the 800 hardware. When it's time to move up, I'd suggest hanging on to the hardware and only changing the drums. Pearl's *Export* kit is a genuine bargain for the beginner or semi-pro player. Even a pro could use it as a second kit for those around-town jobs.

